

The Resilient Library Newsletter

December 27, 2020

Volume 3, Issue 4

PLEASE NOTE:

Many of the images and underlined text in this newsletter have hyperlinks to their corresponding websites

Press Ctrl+click on images and underlined text to be directed to those websites

Inside this issue:

Book Spotlight	3
CreativeBug and Universal Class	4
Animal Webcam Video Links	5
Create Joy and Satisfaction	6
About this Newsletter	8
Library Links, Services & Contact Information	8

Brené Brown on Joy and Gratitude

By [Dr. Brené Brown](#), from [Global Leadership Network](#)

The relationship between joy and gratitude was one of the important things I found in my research. I wasn't expecting it. In my 12 years of research on 11,000 pieces of data, I did not interview one person who had described themselves as joyful, who also did not actively practice gratitude.

For me it was very counterintuitive because I went into the research thinking that the relationship between joy and gratitude was: if you are joyful, you should be grateful. But it wasn't that way at all.

Instead, practicing gratitude invites joy into our lives.

Practice is the part that really changed my life, that really changed my family and the way we live every day. When I say



practice gratitude, I don't mean "the-attitude-of-gratitude" or feeling grateful, I mean *practicing gratitude*.

These folks shared in common a tangible gratitude practice. Some of them kept gratitude journals. Some of them did interesting things like at 1,2,3,4 or 12:34 every day they said something out loud that they were grateful for in their lives.

One of the things we do as a family is say grace at dinner. And so, now, after learning about practicing gratitude, **after grace we go around and everyone says**

something that they are all thankful for.

What's interesting is, when we first started, I thought my children were going to say, "Oh, mom are you experimenting on us?" There was a little bit of that. But after we had done this for a couple weeks, even on those crazy, busy nights, when we were trying to get to soccer, piano and homework, if Steve and I said a quick prayer and start eating, my kids were like, "Whoa...what are you grateful for?"

It's been extraordinary because not only does it invite more joy into our house, it also

See Joy on page 2

is such a soulful window into what is going on in my kids' lives. There are some days when my eighth-grader will say, "I'm joyful that there is a huge thick wall between my room and my brother's room." She'll say something very honest. But recently she had a friend whose mother died. For a month she would say, "I'm just so grateful you all are healthy right now."

Not only did it make us all more aware of what we had and more willing to slow down and really be thankful for the joyful moments we had, but it also let me know where she was emotionally in her life.

My son often says, "I'm grateful for bugs." "I'm grateful for frogs." But sometimes he'll say, "I'm grateful that you picked me

up early." Or "I'm grateful that I finally understand adjectives."

There is a great quote by a Jesuit priest that says, "It's not joy that makes us grateful, it's gratitude that makes us joyful." I guess I was just amazed to see that bubble up in my research so quickly. It's life changing.

Excerpted from [Brené Brown on Joy and Gratitude - Global Leadership Network](#)

Dr. Brené Brown, PhD, LMSW is a research professor at the University of Houston where she holds the Huffington Foundation–Brené Brown Endowed Chair at the [Graduate College of Social Work](#). She has spent the past 16 years studying courage, vulnerability, shame and empathy and is the author of five New York Times bestsellers, including her latest [Dare to Lead](#). Her TED talk—[The Power of Vulnerability](#)—is one of the top five most-viewed TED talks in the world, with more than thirty-five million views.

***It's not joy that makes us grateful,
it's gratitude that makes us joyful.***

Excerpted from an article titled

"Brené Brown's Simple Gratitude Practice"

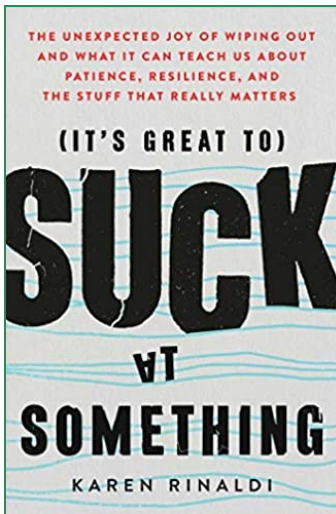
Question: What does practicing gratitude mean in practical terms?

Answer: Our attitude doesn't always translate to action. I think the best way to think about practicing gratitude is: Are you doing something that is tangible and observable? In my family, we go around the table and take turns sharing one thing we're grateful for that day. On birthdays, everyone shares one gratitude for the birthday person. At work, we put people's names on large posters and ask everyone to write one gratitude on a sticky under each name. I also keep a journal and write down three things I'm grateful for almost every day. It's more than just thinking of things we're grateful for—it's verbalizing them.

Excerpted from [Brené Brown's Simple Gratitude Practice | Goop](#)



Book Spotlight— *It's Great to Suck at Something: The Unexpected Joy of Wiping Out and What It Can Teach Us About Patience, Resilience, and the Stuff That Really Matters*



Available in print
at www.rvl.info

"Discover how the freedom of sucking at something can help you build resilience, embrace imperfection, and find joy in the pursuit rather than the goal. What if the secret to resilience and joy is the one thing we've been taught to avoid? When was the last time you tried something new? Something that won't make you more productive, make you more money, or check anything off your to-do list? Something you're really, really bad at, but that brought you joy? Odds are, not recently. As a [terrible] surfer and all-around-imperfect human Karen Rinaldi explains in this eye-opening book, we live in a time of aspirational psychoses. We humblebrag about how hard we work and we prioritize productivity over play. Even kids don't play for the sake of playing anymore: they're building blocks to build the ideal college application. But we're all being had. We're told to be the best or nothing at all. We're trapped in an epic and farcical quest for perfection. We judge others on stuff we can't even begin to master, and it's all making us more anxious and depressed than ever. Worse, we're not improving on what really matters. This book provides the antidote. *(It's Great to) Suck at Something* reveals that the key to a richer, more fulfilling life is finding something to suck

at. Drawing on her personal experience sucking at surfing (a sport she's dedicated nearly two decades of her life to doing without ever coming close to getting good at it) along with philosophy, literature, and the latest science, Rinaldi explores sucking as a lost art we must reclaim for our health and our sanity and helps us find the way to our own riotous suck-ability. She draws from sources as diverse as Anthony Bourdain and surfing luminary Jaimal Yogis, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Jean-Paul Sartre, among many others, and explains the marvelous things that happen to our mammalian brains when we try something new, all to discover what she's learned firsthand: it is great to suck at something. Sucking at something rewires our brain in positive ways, helps us cultivate grit, and inspires us to find joy in the process, without obsessing about the destination. Ultimately, it gives you freedom: the freedom to suck without caring is revelatory. Coupling honest, hilarious storytelling with unexpected insights, *(It's Great to) Suck at Something* is an invitation to embrace our shortcomings as the very best of who we are and to open ourselves up to adventure, where we may not find what we thought we were looking for, but something way more important."

"What if the secret to resilience and joy is the one thing we've been taught to avoid? "

Looking for creative activities—**Creative Bug** and **Universal Class** are two databases that can be accessed for free through the Salem Library website. **Creative Bug** is curated by a team of dreamers and makers who believe that everyone has a creative side. They pride themselves on bringing the latest in art and craft education to our members, and they work with renowned artists to do just that. For the **Universal Class** database, you create an account and log in for free access to over 500 on-demand courses in a wide range of subjects including over 70 online courses in the Crafts & Hobbies category such as Acrylic Painting, Adobe Photoshop, Anti Aging Techniques, Bread Baking, Candle Making, Creative Writing Workshop, Digital Photography, Introduction to Music Appreciation... and MORE.

1. Go to <https://www.salemva.gov/Departments/Salem-Public-Library/Library-Databases>
2. Scroll down and click on either “**Creative Bug**” or “**Universal Class**”

CREATIVEBUG



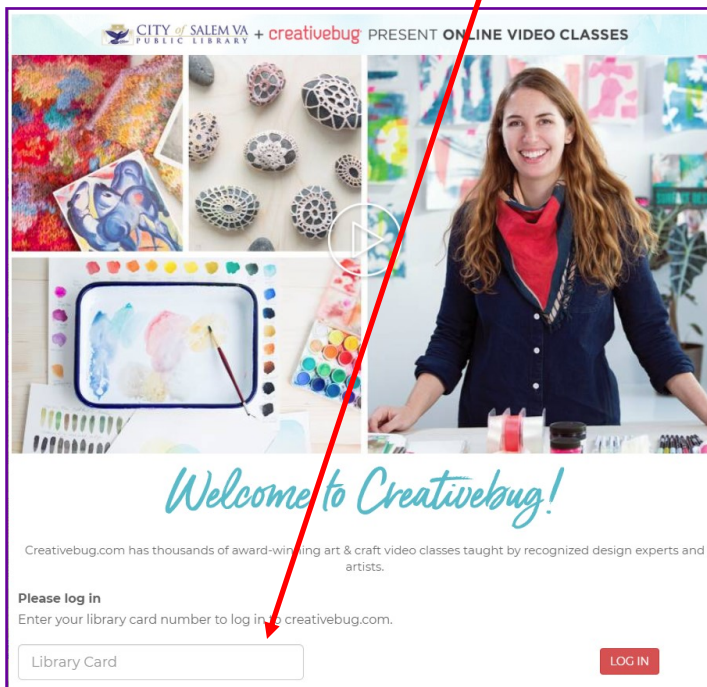
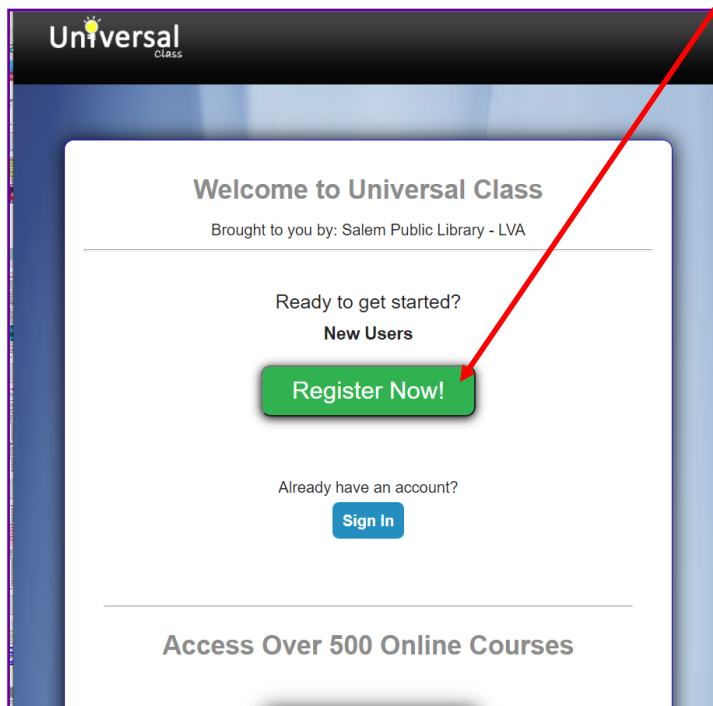
We're a team of dreamers and makers who believe that everyone has a creative side - even you! We pride ourselves on bringing the latest in art and craft education to our members, and we work with renowned artists to do just that.

UNIVERSAL CLASS



Create an account and log in for free access to over 500 on-demand courses in a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, writing, business, health, computer software, coding, crafts and much more! Many courses offer accreditation to earn Continuing Education Units. Suitable for use by teens and adults.

3. You will be directed to the corresponding website where you can then create an account so you can access courses and videos



Creative Bug classes include knitting, crochet, art + design, paper, sewing, quilting, jewelry, crafts for kids, food + home, and holiday + party as well as seasonal classes and daily practice.

By Melanie Kletter,
Excerpted from [Library Journal](#)

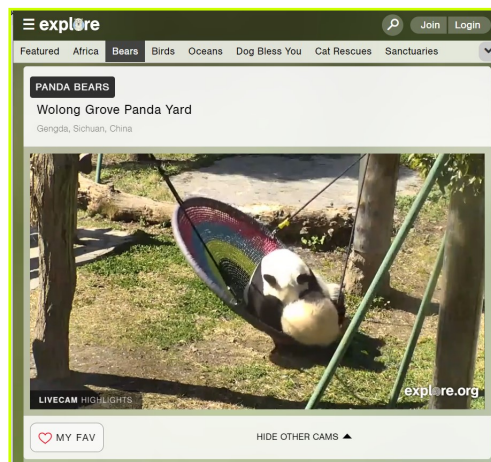
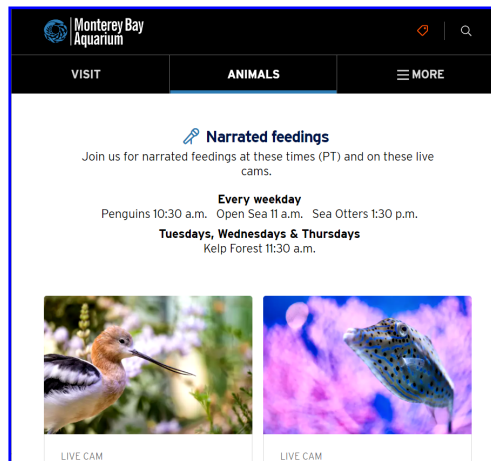
If you're looking for a relaxing and enjoyable pastime, try virtually watching animals frolic in their natural habitats. There are now live animal webcams in places all around the world, as well as several types of virtual experiences that allow you to interact with all kinds of creatures at zoos and aquariums. In addition, animal lovers can view a plethora of free, appealing animal videos anytime on YouTube. Viewing animals online is safe as well as entertaining, and also provides a window into different species and habitats that we would not be able to see otherwise.

Here, we have rounded up a selection of interesting animal cams, online videos, and live virtual animal experiences to allow you to find some joy watching adorable animals at play. Not all of the cams operate around the clock, so be sure to check the details. Also, while many of the experiences listed here are free, some of the virtual ones cost a fee and require registration.



Baby Animal Videos at the Smithsonian's National Zoo

The Smithsonian's National Zoo has an array of free animal videos available for on-demand viewing on its YouTube channel. Highlights here include a playlist of baby animal videos, where you can tune into watch short, adorable videos of the zoo's panda cubs, baby gorillas, cheetah cubs, a newborn gazelle, and even naked mole-rat pups. One of our favorite baby animal videos shows a kiwi chick emerging from its shell.



Audubon Bird Cams

These livestreams follow Atlantic puffins in Maine, osprey nests in Connecticut, and sandhill cranes in Nebraska, among others. Some of these cams are more active during certain seasons and migration periods.

Monterey Bay Aquarium live cams

This renowned aquarium in California has a number of web cams. . . . Each video stream is accompanied by soothing music, which can help you relax as you watch sea creatures glide and float through the water. Highlights include a sea otter cam and the coral reef cam. There is also a jellyfish cam, which is especially peaceful and soothing. Each of the live cameras operates on a different schedule.

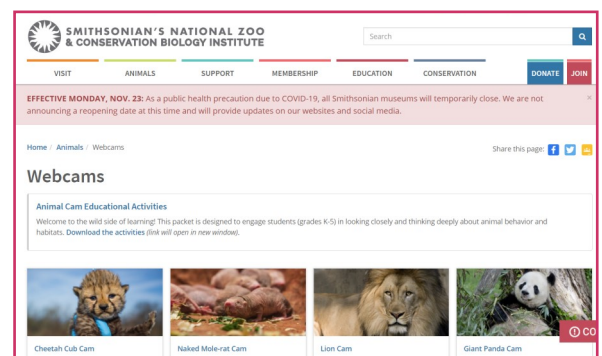
Wolong Grove Panda Yard

The Wolong National Nature Reserve in central China protects giant pandas and encourages these endangered animals to breed. The live cam provides views into 11 different yards in the park, and you can watch adult and baby pandas as they play, eat bamboo, climb trees, and more. This cam is part of the explore.org network, which provides wilderness livestreams in locales all over the world.



Penguins at the Shedd Aquarium

Penguin lovers can register for a 45-minute small group virtual experience with these unusual birds. For a fee of about \$50, you will get to virtually see the aquarium's penguins up close, learn about their anatomy and grooming, and go behind the scenes of their home at the aquarium, which is located in Chicago, IL. You can also ask the zoo staff any questions you have about penguins.





From [Mental Health America](#)

Do you have tons of items on your to-do list? Well, add one more. It's time to pencil in a little pleasure.

Chances are, you simply deserve some joy and satisfaction. But if you prefer, you can think about the serious side of fun. Experts say good feelings can boost your ability to bounce back from stress, solve problems, think flexibly and even fight disease.

Studies show that:

- Laughing decreases pain, may help your heart and lungs, promotes muscle relaxation and can reduce anxiety.
- Positive emotions can decrease stress hormones and build emotional strength.
- Leisure activities offer a distraction from problems, a sense of competence and many other benefits. . . .

WAYS TO CREATE JOY AND SATISFACTION

Strengthen Your Funny Bone

You can keep it together by cracking up: It's hard to be irritated, worried or glum when you're rolling in laughter. And gentle humor often helps defuse a tense situation.

Check out some tips:

- Pick up some joke books or humorous essays at a bookstore or library. Keep a few handy for a quick pick-me-up.
- Put together a collection of sayings or photos that make you smile, and stick them someplace visible. Change them occasionally, or you'll likely stop noticing

them.

- Keep a humor DVD in the car and steer clear of traffic frustration.
- Watch or listen to comedy via video, podcast or website. Or get a laugh the old-fashioned way—through the comics section.
- Try to laugh at some of the hassles in your life if you can. Finding what's a bit absurd or amazing in a challenging situation just might offer relief.

Find Some Fun

Whether it's playing golf or goofing around, having fun isn't just, well, fun. It also promotes our overall well-being and success.

Leisure activities can boost our effectiveness, broaden our perspective, increase creativity and re-stock our energy supply. Leisure can combat stress by offering:

- Social support
- Chances to build confidence
- Distraction for difficulties
- An emotional lift

Let's have some fun:

- **Free up some time.** Can you afford to scratch something off your calendar? Is there anyone you can ask to help lighten your load? Set aside a time for fun, and keep it like it was a doctor's appointment.
- **Do something you loved to do as a kid.** Run through the sprinklers, hang from the monkey bars, make a mess with finger paints.
- **Do something you've always wanted to do.** Bake a soufflé, build a tree house, learn to knit. If you're not sure how, [see page 4 of this newsletter to explore the Salem Library's databases, [Creative Bug](#) or [Universal Class](#)].
- **Pursue a creative interest.** Writing, singing or making music

all have therapeutic effects. Or just turn on a song you love: Brain images show that music can trigger feel-good hormones.

- **Do it with someone you love.** Get an extra boost from your leisure by sharing it. Good times build relationships, and [good relationships](#) are key to our happiness.

*Set aside a time
for fun, and
keep it like it was
a doctor's
appointment.*

What's Your "Flow"?

Some activities provide an extra psychological boost, argues prominent psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi. They are activities that totally absorb us, challenge without overstressing us and make us feel fulfilled. They are what create the feeling of "flow."

Everybody's got their own sources of flow. For you, it may mean whooshing down the Alps; for someone else it may be basting a turkey, bowling or mowing the grass. Whatever your flow, it will make you feel effective, confident and in control.

To get more flow:

- **Identify the high points of your day.** Try to note when you've got that "in the zone" feeling. Or reflect back at the end of the day to see what made you feel good. Then try to do those activities more.
- **Don't look for flow in passive pursuits.** Watching TV, for ex-

See [Joy and Satisfaction](#) on page 7

ample, doesn't offer the challenge that tends to spark flow. And once you improve at a task, consider raising the level of difficulty in some way.

- **Inject flow into some regular activities.** If not, inject more meaning or ingenuity into routine tasks, you can make them more rewarding. . . .

Sometimes, we don't need to add new activities to get more pleasure. We just need to soak up the joy in the ones we've already got.

Go Ahead, Indulge

Though there probably isn't much research on the emotional value of a good soak in the tub, we all need some kind of relaxing refuge.

Consider these options:

- **Therapeutic massage.** A massage can relieve muscle tension, stimulate the body's natural painkillers and boost your immune system. It can also help you feel less anxious and more relaxed.
- **Meditation or a meditative form of exercise.** Try tai chi or qi gong, which use soothing, flowing motions.
- **A nature break.** A blue sky, lush bushes, a scenic lake. Walking in—or even just looking at—nature calms our nerves and relieves mental fatigue. . . . [See page 5 of this newsletter]
- **A mental vacation.** . . . Close your eyes and envision a scene

you love. Try to fully imagine the experience of being there.

Get More Out of What You've Got

Sometimes, we don't need to add new activities to get more pleasure. We just need to soak up the joy in the ones we've already got.

If we don't stop to notice the positives in our life, it's like they barely exist. Unfortunately, our daily demands sometime block our ability to savor. To increase it, try these tips:

- **Practice mindfulness,** or the experience of being fully aware. You can start by really relishing a meal. Feel the textures, taste the flavors, enjoy the aromas. Don't rush, don't answer the phone (and don't talk with your mouth full!). Remind yourself to be conscious of other experiences throughout the day, like how your shower feels on your skin or how the sun feels on your face.
- **Share the joy.** If you want to more fully experience your positive experiences, tell a friend about them. That way you'll get to relive the moment—and enjoy your friend's reaction.
- **Let it out.** When you're feeling good, throw your whole self into it. Go ahead, jump up and down, clap your hands. Research shows that if you act out a certain amount of emotion, you can fire up that feeling.

Excerpted from [Create Joy and Satisfaction | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](http://mhanational.org)

To Be Continued in Next Week's Issue:

Take Care of Your Spirit

10 Live Your Life Well Tools

These proven tools can help you feel stronger and more hopeful.

1. **Connect with others**
2. **Stay positive**
3. **Get physically active**
4. **Help others**
5. **Get enough sleep**
6. **Create joy and satisfaction**
7. **Eat well**
8. **Take care of your spirit**
9. **Deal better with hard times**
10. **Get professional help if you need it**

Excerpted from [Ten Tools | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](http://mhanational.org)





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CONTACT FREE PICK-UP is available in our front lobby every day from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for picking up requested items. Please call before heading to the library so that we can check out your items before you get here. *Thank you!*

LEAVE IT TO A LIBRARIAN For Adult Fiction: *The library is closed and you don't want to spend hours browsing the online catalog?* Call us, email us, or click the link on our website home page to give a hint or two (genre, authors you like). Tell us how many books you want. We'll fill a bag and leave it in the front foyer for you.

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Click on images or underlined text to be directed to the appropriate website.

Scan the QR code (bottom left on this page) to see our [Calendar of Events](#).

**To all of our Friends and members:
Thank you for all of your support,
encouragement, good wishes, and
patronage in 2020.**

**Here's hoping for the best in 2021!
— Salem Public Library Staff**